

## External Affairs

my responsibility of being the communicating channel between this house and the house of Ghana, and instead of instructing the Clerk I will take it that it is an instruction given by the house to myself to do precisely that.

**Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East):** It is rather a prayer to Your Honour.

## MARINE AND FISHERIES

## CONCURRENCE IN FIRST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

**Mr. T. G. W. Ashbourne (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador)** presented the first report of the standing committee on marine and fisheries, and moved that the report be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

## STATEMENT ON DISCUSSIONS WITH PREMIER OF FRANCE

**Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, in reply to a question asked yesterday by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra I should like to make a brief general report to the house of the discussions which I had over the week end with the President of the Council of Ministers of France, Mr. Guy Mollet, during his visit to Ottawa. Let me say at once that no formal or informal agreements were concluded between France and Canada during this visit. Mr. Mollet and Mr. Pineau did not come to Ottawa for that purpose. They were paying us an official visit for the purpose of exchanging views on a wide range of topics of importance to both governments. In the course of these discussions Mr. Mollet expressed his point of view and I expressed mine, but we found ourselves in a very wide measure of agreement and I can assure the house that from our point of view the discussions we had with our distinguished visitors were not only very timely but highly satisfactory.

Mr. Mollet has already given the house a general indication of the topics which our discussions covered and these will be found in the transcript of the address he made to the house. I do not think it is necessary that I repeat them. He reported to the house his discussions and even expressed his view about the advantages of this solid basis of the new Franco-German relations; the European atomic energy community, Euratom; common European marketing; the Atlantic alliance in its political, military and economic aspects; the Algerian problem; the Middle East situation; the future of the Suez canal;

and the prevention of subversive Soviet infiltration into the Arab world. I agree fully with the summary he expressed to the house, which will be found in the translation of his remarks as recorded at page 1871 of *Hansard* of March 4. I quote in part:

The problems of which I have been speaking to you have been—

I am reluctant to go into any greater detail than Mr. Mollet did because the conversations were of a confidential character and covered the matters which he enumerated. I can assure the house that we both felt we had had a very useful exchange of views. I think I said in opening my remarks that no agreements or understandings had been reached. The discussions formed the basis, however, of certain things the French government would be glad if we found it possible to do and to which we promised to give careful and sympathetic consideration.

On the other hand I was informed that the French government hope to be placing with my colleague, the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe), in the near future very substantial orders for Canadian wheat.

**Mr. Howard C. Green (Vancouver-Quadra):** There was one question mentioned by Prime Minister Mollet which was also mentioned by our own Prime Minister today, and that had to do with the Suez canal. Mr. Mollet is reported to have said on page 1871 of *Hansard*:

The Suez canal is also one of the "geographic" causes of tension. Its sabotage by Egypt without any military motive to justify it, and the blackmail exercised since then over the pace of clearing and opening the canal, shows the little confidence merited by the government of Egypt.

Is the Prime Minister now in a position to give the house further information on the clearing of the Suez canal and its future use? One of the reasons I ask is that Mr. Dulles is quoted today as having said in Washington yesterday—and I read from the report:

State Secretary Dulles called on Egypt today to stop "dragging its feet" and get the Suez canal clear and open now that Israel has scheduled the withdrawal of her troops from Egyptian territory.

**Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East):** No, Mr. Speaker, I have no more recent information about that. I understand that the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson) is returning to the United Nations for further conferences with the secretary general, and that the secretary general is apt to be leaving for Cairo on Monday. We all know that all these questions are linked together, and we hope that now a start has been made on the elimination of the causes of conflict, that start will lead quite rapidly to significant results.